

*M<sup>rs</sup> Lefingham in the Character of Flora?*



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*Act 1<sup>st</sup>*

*They sing.*

*PUBLISHED by J. Harrison & Co. 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1770.*

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THE  
COUNTRY LASSES;  
OR, THE  
CUSTOM OF THE MANOR.  
A  
COMEDY.

As it is Acted at the  
THEATRES - ROYAL  
IN  
Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

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Written by Mr. CHARLES JOHNSON. K

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Nontra nec erubuit sylvas habitare Thalia.

VIRG.

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L O N D O N :

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M DCC LXXIX.

## PROLOGUE.

Spoken by a CHILD.

**M**AKE me to speak a prologue! Is he wild?  
A prologue! Lord! are prologues for a child?  
Such beaten words! so hard to bring 'em put in!  
The drama—Arbans—God knows how much Latin!  
Then if I should mistake a word, you know,  
There's Mr. Wilks within would snub one so—  
But I must do't.

Plays, like ambassadors, in form are shewn,  
When first they've public audience of the town;  
The prologue ceremoniously baranques,  
And moves your pity for the author's pangs;  
Acquaints you that he stands behind the scenes,  
And trembles for the fondling of his brains.  
Or with—Nay, if the poet peeps, I vow  
He puts me clearly out—Or with a bow,  
(I mean a curtsy) [Curtsying] beg the ladies pity;  
Or else in thread-bare jests affront the city;  
Or gravely tell you, what you knew before,  
How Ben and Shakespear wrote in days of yore;  
Then damn the criticks first, that envious train,  
Who, right or wrong, resolve to damn again.  
Our author seeks, like bards of—*Of—*Ob! Greece,  
To make his play and prologue of a piece;  
He leads you to the rural scenes, to prove  
The country bargain still is love for love.  
Ob, Covent-Garden! nursery of ills!  
Fam'd for consumption both of wit—and pills:  
Who would not quit thy walks, and vice in fashion,  
The doubts and fears of mercenary passion,  
For safe complying nympts, unknowing sinners,  
A feast of unbought love in cleanly pinnars?  
Hold—what comes next? [Looking on a paper.]  
I'll never say't; in short—  
We've bigger actresses are fitter for't—  
Lord, how you laugh! as 'twere some naughty joke,  
Sure there's no wickedness in what I spoke.  
How should I say such things, who never knew  
What kissing meant, before I play'd Miss True?

## EPILOGUE.

Spoken by AURA in Boy's Clothes.

**C**RITICKS, the poet's champion here I stand;  
Lo! in his name, the combat I demand;  
'Tis my opinion that his cause is good,  
And I'll defend it with my heart's best blood;  
I'll push you, my bold boys, the round parade,  
Caris over arm, or terse, or flaconnade.

—Codso! these breeches have so fired my brain,  
I shan't be easy till I've kill'd my man;  
What! not one beau step forth to give me battle;  
Where are these pretty things that used to tattle  
Such tender nonsense?—But they're all so civil,  
They hate a naked weapon; 'tis the devil.

—Now let me die, my dear, Sir Coxcomb cries,  
You want no other weapons, but your eyes.

I hate these fawning triflers, and declare  
Against all smock-faced criticks open war.

Know, gentlemen, the poet's my ally,  
And I'll defend him to the last, or die;  
My sword is out; I'll never basely sue,  
Nor sheath it while my enemy's in view;  
No bribes, no tricks, no wheedling of my face,  
Include us both i'th' treaty, if you please;  
But faith, I'll never make a separate peace.

No, ye French heroes, I'll not take your word,  
You'll beat a man when you have got his sword;  
Ay, that's your play—I know ye, Sirs, of old,  
You bully like the devil—with your gold;  
What must we do, then?—Settle plenipo's,  
And bravely, sword in hand, treat with our foe,  
To you we fly, ye charitable fair,  
To put an end to this dramatic war;  
Your smiles will cause all hostile acts to cease,  
And make a lasting, honourable peace.

## Dramatis Personæ.

### M E N.

HEARTWELL, in love with Flora.  
MODELY.  
FREEHOLD.  
SIR JOHN ENGLISH.  
LURCHER, Nephew to Sir John.  
SNEAK, a Taylor.  
LONGBOTTOM.  
CARBUNCLE, a Vintner.  
TIM. SHACKLEFIGURE.  
DOUBLEJUG.  
VULTUR.

### W O M E N.

FLORA.  
AURA.

Countrymen and Maids, &c.

SCENE, A Country Village, about forty Miles  
from London.



# THE COUNTRY LASSES.

## ACT I.

SCENE, *an open Country in Perspective, with a Gentleman's Seat on a Hill, at the Foot of which is seen a Farm-house.*

Enter Modely and Heartwell, in Riding Habits; a Footman appearing, &c.

Heart. LEAD our horses round to the farm-house which stands yonder at the foot of the hill.

Mod. We'll walk cros the fields, and meet you there.

Heart. You heard the country fellows say we were seven miles from any town; you know our horses are so lame, it will be impossible to travel on; you see the sun is sinking from the top of yonder hill. Be content, George; to-night thou shalt have thy beloved mistress. Variety, and lie in a barn, in a warm barn, upon a truss of clean straw—

Mod. With a wholesome country girl, whose breath is sweeter than the bloom of violets, in a straw hat, a kersey gown, and a white dimity waistcoat; with natural red and white that innocently flushes over her face, and shews every motion of her heart.

Heart. Thus thy imaginations always cheat thee of thy joys. No, no; if we get credit for a barn, 'tis all I expect. This is a change of life, however.

Mod. True; we tread no more the same insipid circle; our pains quicken our pleasures, and disappointments giye spirit to our joys.

Heart. Ha! then a man should be sick to relish health.

Mod. Wherefore has nature opened this wild irregular scene of various pleasures; why given us appetites, passions, limbs, but to possess, desire, enjoy her beautiful creation? I'll travel over, and taste every blessing; nor wait till the tired sense palls with possession, but fly from joy to joy, unsated, fresh for new delights.

Heart. Do so, make yourself as good an entertainment as you can possibly form in imagination; while I walk forward, and endeavour to get a real supper and a bed. [Going.]

Mod. Nay, I'll go with you. You know I am no Platonic; in love or mutton, I always fall to without ceremony. [Exeunt.]

SCENE opens, and discovers Flora, Aura, and some Country Maids and Men dancing, with a Fiddle before them, singing the Burden of the Ballad, The Lads and the Lasses a Sheep-sheering go.

Aura. In short, my feet are out o' measure; I am tired with the mirth of the day.

Flora. You have won the garland of the green; the sheep-sheerers have given you the honours of their feast; you must pay the fees, and dance out of their debt.—First we'll have the sheep-sheering song.

## The SHEEP-SHEERING, a Ballad.

### I.

When the rose is in bud, and blue violets blow;  
When the birds sing us love-songs on every bough;  
When cowslips, and daisies, and daffodils spread,  
And adorn and perfume the green flowery mead;  
When without the plough  
Fat oxen low,  
The lads and the lasses a sheep-sheering go.

### II.

The cleanly milk-pail  
Is fill'd with brown ale;  
Our table's the grass;  
Where we kiss and we sing,  
And we dance in a ring,  
And every lad has his lass.

### III.

The shepherd sheers his jolly fleece,  
How much richer than that which they say was in Greece!

'Tis our cloth and our food,  
And our politic blood;  
'Tis the seat which our nobles all sit on;  
'Tis a mine above ground,  
Where our treasure is found;  
'Tis the gold and the silver of Britain.

Aura. Now, Clodden, once more thy hand, if thou darest venture t'other trip.

[Dance, and exeunt omnes, except Aura and Flora. —Cousin, I'll go to London.]

Flora. What new lure has Satan employed to tempt you thither?

Aura. Only to see some of my own species, a few men and women; for I cannot look on the things we talk'd to just now, but as beings between men and beasts, and of an inferior nature to the people who grow in cities. If I stay longer among these savages, I shall not have vanity enough to keep myself clean. I must go to London to recover my pride; 'tis starving here.

Flora. And yet, how often have I heard thee rill at London, and call it an infectious congregation of vapours, an assemblage of falsehood and hypocrisy?

Aura. 'Tis true; but my affections have taken another turn. The heart of a woman, girl, like a bowl down a hill, continually changes as it rolls. I declare seriously, I never knew my own mind two hours together in my life.

Flora. Cousin, thou art a very wild fop.

Aura. We are all so in our hearts. What girl, whose whole composition is not dough and phlegm, would quit the management of her fan for a shepherd's crook, or gather daisies in the meads, and make garlands for lambs, when she may pick up hearts in the ring, and make conquests of men; or be content to behold the muddy reflection of her own face in a pond, when she may glide thro' a crowd of living mirrors in the drawing-room, and be flattered by the whole beau monde!—But, o' my conscience, here they are!

*Flora.* What?

*Aura.* Men, my dear, men—human creatures; look yonder, they move towards us; my heart beats quick at the uncommon sight; does not thine too? Be honest, and tell truth.

*Flora.* Remember your character, compose yourself, put your manners in your pocket, and be a clown for a moment.

*Enter Modely and Heartwell as Flora and Aura are going off.*

*Mode.* Pretty maidens, stay one moment; turn again and give your assistance to two honest fellows in distress—our horses are lame, 'tis late, we have lost our way—

*Heart.* And we wou'd know where—(She is intolerably handsome! [*Aside of Flora.*])

*Mode.* We shall lie to-night?—(She is a sweet girl! [*Aside of Aura.*])

*Flora.* Sir, we buy, we don't sell fortune; two gypsies just now, offered us a penny-worth, they passed by those elms, I believe you may o'ertake 'em.

*Aura.* Yes, Sir, they will tell you what will happen to you exactly—good evening. [*Going.*]

*Mode.* Nay, if I part with you thus.

[*Holding her.*]

*Aura.* Pray, Sir, as you are a gentleman—

*Mode.* Why, you wou'd not leave us in a strange place, child?

*Aura.* We have no title at all to you; if you are a couple of stray cattle, all we can do, is to bring you to the constable.

*Mode.* And what then?

*Aura.* Why then he must cry you three market-days, and if nobody owns you, you fall to the lord o'the manor.

*Heart.* [*To Flora, to whom he has been talking.*] Stay one moment, dear creature, vanish not immediately, if you would not have me believe myself in a vision, and go raving up and down, talking of angels in country habits.

*Flora.* You have been talking all this while out o'my compass: pray, Sir, come down to my understanding; mine, you see, is as plain as my dress—

*Heart.* In one word then; who is the inhabitant of that farm-house in the bottom?

*Aura.* A four old man, Sir, who, when he is in a very good-humour, vouchsafes to call me daughter.

*Flora.* And one cousin there we live, gentlemen, and are like to live, fretting one another like silk and worsted wove together, till we quite wear out.

*Heart.* You have none of the rust of the country upon you—'tis wonderful; you live polish'd among savages. Neither your words, your mien, your manners, nor any thing but your habits, speak you what you wou'd appear.

*Aura.* My father and the vicar of our parish taught us both to read and write; but indeed, Sir, my father was born a gentleman, and is by accident only a clown, for having in his youth profusely squander'd a great estate in London among common friends and mistresses, he took an aversion to the town, and turn'd his sword into a ploughshare.

*Heart.* Is it impossible to see this four Cynic!—I persuade myself we might revive those seeds of humanity that once liv'd within him, and get entertainment in his farm for one night only; especially if you wou'd be so good to use your power too, and venture to intercede for a stranger.

*Flora.* Sir, 'tis impossible! if you wore any form but what you do.

*Heart.* Ask him only; try a little; use the influence of your eyes—Ask him with a look of pity,

and 'tis impossible he should deny you. [*To Aura.*]

*Aura.* Will you venture?

*Flora.* I am half afraid! if you wou'd second me,

*Aura.* Never fear, my girl: I'll stand bravely by thee—Gentlemen, we'll endeavour to prevail, and you shall have an answer in the turn of a second.

[*Exeunt Flora and Aura.*]

*Heart.* What a couple of jewels are here in rustic work!

*Mode.* I never beheld any thing so charming!

*Heart.* What a shape, a neck, a chest!

*Mode.* An air, a mien, an instep, a foot!

*Heart.* Why, you don't mean my girl?

*Mode.* Nor you mine, I hope?

*Heart.* Mine is the most beautiful piece of flesh and blood—

*Mode.* Mine the sweetest, most angelical little rogue—

*Heart.* Her hair is dark brown, her eyes are two black globes of living light—Diamonds of the first water—

*Mode.* Her breath is sweeter than the new-made hay-cock. I had rather look upon her than enjoy a toast—

*Heart.* I never saw any thing in a brocade so genteel.

*Mode.* I am stark mad for a dimity petticoat.

*Heart.* Ah, rogue, rogue! what a lucky night is this!

*Mode.* If we get in. [*Embracing one another.*]

*Heart.* If we have entrance—Hold, here they come, and old Crabtree with 'em.

*Enter Freehold, Flora and Aura.*

*Free.* Oh, hoh—perhaps these are some of my Covent-garden acquaintance.

*Flora.* I can't tell; but they have waited a great while for an answer.

*Free.* Let 'em wait, with a murrain.

*Aura.* Please, Sir, to say aye or no.

*Free.* No, then, no—Burn my house and barns, send the murrain among my cattle, the mildew in my corn, and the blight in my fruit—but let no London plagues come within my doors—What has bewitch'd you to ask such a question?

*Flora.* They desire in common humanity, as they are gentlemen—

*Free.* Gentlemen—Hah! why they are the bane of your sex. The devil did less mischief in the form of the serpent to Eve, than in that to her daughters—A woman's reputation is always lost when 'tis ventur'd—but these are profess'd sharpers, who never play upon the square for beauty, and are worse enemies to it than old age or the small-pox.

*Aura.* We are guarded, Sir, by you—by your instructions.

*Free.* Hah! true daughter of the first woman. Well! I'll talk with 'em, to oblige you. Where are they?

*Flora.* There they are, Sir: they look like sober, civil, honest gentlemen, and not as if they came from London.

*Free.* Now I think they look like a deputation from the cuckold-makers of the corporation.

*Mode.* Sir, the unexpected occasion of this trouble—

[*To Freehold.*]

*Free.* Oons, Sir, speak truth; I know what you are pumping for, a pretty excuse for an unseasonable visit; I have not told one lye in compliment these thirty years.

*Heart.* Nor heard one neither?

*Free.* No, Sir, nor heard one; here we only make up a few necessary lyes for a market-day, or so.

*Mode.* But we wou'd only say, in plain words—

*Free.* I'll tell you what honourable design you two have clubb'd for in plain words; your horses were to fall lame, you were to be benighted, and making use of my humanity for entrance into my house, you very honestly hope for an opportunity to ruin my family. Ask your conscience, is it not so? hah!

*Heart.* We confess the charge is too generally true; but we beg leave to be excepted, and declare such practices, whatever habits men wear, call 'em villains—However, if 'tis impossible to gain credit with you—

*Free.* Whence came you?

*Heart.* From London.

*Free.* From London! so I thought again; the mart of iniquity, Satan's chief residence; he picks up a vagabond soul or two now and then with us, but he monopolizes there.

*Mode.* But, Sir, to our purpose; is there no security to be taken for one night only?

*Free.* There is; but 'tis in my own hands, if you'll accept the terms; look ye, gentlemen, I have one faithful friend in the world, 'tis honest Towter, a true-bred mastiff, one who never scrapes nor kisses my hand, but in honest truth; who will stand by me with his best blood. Now he does me the favour to lie every night at my bed's foot; I am likewise master of a brace of large-boned thrashers; and these three have been the guardians of my farm these ten years; they have no more respect than I for a laced coat: you know the rest; if I hear the conies squeak, I'll send the hunt abroad; I'll ha' no poaching, no tunnelling, no driving in the dark.

*Heart.* Sir, we accept your terms; he that intends no wrong, fears none.

*Free.* There then, enter. There lies your way.

[*Exeunt Freehold, Modely and Heartwell, into the Farm.*]

*Flora.* Laud, cousin, he has taken 'em both in.

*Aura.* I tremble so, I don't know what to do.

*Flora.* It was your fault.

*Aura.* You were bewitched to ask him.

*Flora.* Why did not you advise me to the contrary?

*Aura.* O dear, my heart beats.

*Flora.* Ay, it beats to arms, child; the garrison is besieged.

*Aura.* Come, let's in; courage.

*Flora.* These are your doings, you wild little colt.

[*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE, the Inside of the Farm.

[*Enter Freehold, Modely, and Heartwell.*]

*Free.* Forget you have been within the walls of a city, and we shall agree well enough.

*Heart.* But, Sir, do you never, never intend to see London again?

*Free.* Never, never, I tell you.

*Heart.* Why so, Sir?

*Free.* There is not a creature among you wears his natural shape; your cullies would be thought sharpers, and your sharpers cullies; your noisy roaring boys are cowards, and your brave men silent; ugliness is exactly dressed, and beauty in dishabille. The few virtues you have, you hide, and affect crimes to be agreeable. In a word, you are all false, double-faced, execrable hypocrites. Come, will you drink a cup of brown ale before you eat?

*Heart.* I thank you, Sir, but I am not thirsty now.

*Free.* Oons, do you never drink but when you are dry? We have none o' your lemonade or sherbet here, man; no, nor your t'other waxy thin potation, called French wine, that brewer of false love and politicks: we live upon English beef and beer, the staple of our own country.

*Heart.* And every honest Briton ought to encourage it.

*Free.* Right, boy: come, will you smoke a pipe before supper? a pipe is the best whet in the world.

*Mode.* No, by no means.

*Free.* Oh, hoh, it will spoil your kissing.

*Mode.* Pray, Sir, who is the lord of your manor here?

*Free.* We have no lord, Sir, we have a lady.

*Mode.* A lady?

*Free.* Ay, Sir, she lives at the great house on the hill, above, with an old knight her kinsman, whose estate joins to her's; one Sir John English, a gentleman of right old-fashioned hospitality: he has only one fault, he is a little too fond of your quality: he was at court in his youth, where he had a superficial view of the glare and gaiety of the place; and now he doats upon every thing that comes from thence; he is particularly civil to a page; he has a wonderful veneration for a squire o' the body; a knight gives him great joy; and he is ravished with a lord.

*Mode.* A very odd humour: but as to the lady of your manor?

*Free.* Ay, there's a lady, a miracle! she has youth and beauty, and two thousand pounds a year, and yet has the use of all her limbs; she will walk you four miles before the sun is up, and come home with natural colours on her face, got by wholesome exercise. She uses no face physic; she is none o' your town daubers, that are in danger of losing their complexions for a kiss; no, she looks like the blooming rose, and is as sweet as the breath of the morning.

*Mode.* Was she never married, Sir?

*Free.* No, the old colonel, her father, Sir Frederick Beauville (a worthy man he was) left her and her estate free; and she says she will keep 'em both so: she hates London, your men and your manners.

*Mode.* And so she is settled, as the timber upon her estate, for life, with her old kinsman!

*Free.* Yes, there they live together; and let me tell you, the old hospitable genius of England seems revived in them; they are of almost as much benefit to their neighbours as the sun and rain, a general good. Well! but come into this room and drink a cup of ale; nay, I will have it so.

*Mode.* We'll follow you.

*Free.* What, you see the wenches coming; remember our articles, or Towter's the word. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Flora and Aura.*]

*Mode.* Hah, my Mademoiselle once again! I'll kill thee my dear little thief, with kisses.

*Aura.* Then I shall be the first maid that ever died that death, and deserve to be buried with my face downwards; though I have known many a big fellow brag of his victories, who durst never draw his sword.

*Mode.* But I have fought many a duel.

*Aura.* And did you always conquer?

*Mode.* No, sometimes it has been a drawn battle; but now I'll be victorious or die. [*Kisses and bugs her.*]

*Aura.* Laud, lud, you do so rouse and rumple one's clothes: you men are the strangest creatures.

*Mode.* You women have the most whimsical fancies! Whither do you run? What, must I follow you?

*Aura.* If you have courage, the old dragon is in the next room.

*Mode.* Pox o' the dragon; I am a knight-errant, and 'tis my business to conquer dragons.

*Aura.* Come on, then, Hercules the second.

[*Exeunt Modely and Aura.*]

*Heart.* Hear me; let me swear to you, fair maid.

*Flora.* What is it you would swear; that you love me?

*Heart.* More than life, joy, health, or liberty; I am all air while I talk to you.



*Flora.* Come, then, let us clear up at once, and talk common-sense to one another.

*Heart.* Agree!—

*Flora.* So be it!

*Heart.* Why then really I never liked a woman better in my life.

*Flora.* I think you are something more than tolerable; I was going to say an agreeable fellow.

*Heart.* Do you like me?

*Flora.* As I might a picture.

*Heart.* Do you take me only for the shadow of a man?

*Flora.* To me no more, for I look on this accident only as the idle delusion of a morning's dream.

*Heart.* Then let me wake thee into real happiness, the little god of love shall wanton in thy heart, as he now plays and revels in thy eyes.

*Flora.* Hold! hold! you are running back into metaphors; why this is downright poetry. Pra, come to common-sense again.

*Heart.* That is very true; to be short, then, whereabouts is your bed-chamber?

*Flora.* Pho, now you talk idly.

*Heart.* Do you lie alone, child? [*Kissing her.*]

*Flora.* Why are you so impertinent?

*Heart.* Why are you so coy?

*Flora.* What, then, it seems, you do certainly assure yourself, that, having kissed me, squeezed my hand, and sighed out a few unnecessary fine things, I shall fall plumb into your arms, as cats get birds by gazing at 'em?

*Heart.* Come, my love, this dialect is as affected as t'other; take this jewel, accept it, wear it as a token of the most pure affection; you shall live with me, command me and my fortune. I'll take you from this cottage, and this odd old man, and you shall live as your beauty and your wit demand you should, in all the various pleasures this gay world can give you. [*Embracing her.*]

*Flora.* Here, Sir, take your toy again; I thank you humbly for the mighty favour; I sell no beauty. What would you barter with me for myself? Bribe me out of my person? 'Tis poorly done; but know, Sir, I have a heart within, that proudly tells me no price shall ever buy it: but is it honest in you to tempt that innocence you should protect? Reason distinguishes men from beasts; and virtue, men from men: now, as you boast of birth and virtuous ancestors, and would wear those honours as your lawful merit: think, reflect; are your intentions agreeable to justice, honour, gratitude? You wrong yourself as well as me; farewell. [*Exit.*]

*Heart.* She has stung me to the soul with her too just reproaches; I am conscious and ashamed of my crime. I must have her, though at the price of liberty. I'll marry her; but what will the world say—I'll renounce it; I'll abjure it;

I'll give her all my future life, and prove,

Like Anthony, the world well lost for love. [*Exit.*]

## ACT II

*Enter Lurcher, Hawkwell, Vultur, Carbuncle a Vintner, Longbottom a Peruke-maker, and Sneak a Taylor.*

*Lurch.* **A**H, Vultur! love and the dice have undone me. I have pursu'd Angelica, and my bad fortune, to the last farthing. What must I do? dishonour waits upon necessity, and he that keeps his virtue when he is poor, is a hero indeed.—Yet I'll endeavour, struggle hard, and

not part with the gentleman while 'tis possible to preserve him.

*Vult.* What do you mean to do with these hungry rascals, who follow you thus for their debts?

*Lurch.* To pay 'em.

*Vult.* When?

*Lurch.* To-morrow.

*Vult.* Which way?

*Lurch.* My uncle shall lend me the money.

*Vult.* Good!

*Lurch.* Aye, my uncle, Sir John English, who inhabits the great house with the turret o' top there. He shall lend me the money, then will I discharge these clamorous thieves, and be saucy to them in my turn.

*Vult.* You rave; why your uncle has not seen you these ten years, nor can be prevail'd upon to trust you even with subsistence. What do you mean?

*Lurch.* Why, he shall lend me the money, and not know he lends it me: I'll extort it from him by the violence of stratagem; I'll starve him full in the face, and make him believe I oblige him when I receive the money.—

*Vult.* Riddles! riddles!

*Sneak.* I pray you, Master Lurcher, indeed now, you know I have waited a long time, a most scandalous long time, for my money, and your bill lengthens and lengthens every day; upon my word, I shall not be able to hold out.—Besides, here you have draggled me a long way, and told me I should be paid by your uncle; and alas-a-day, 'tis an idle tale, a flim-flam, for you dare not so much as look towards the gates of his house—No, he won't see you, it seems; I wish I were at home again.—Here have you brought us into a cursed country, where we can neither get victuals, nor sleep.

*Carb.* Pho, pox, this is very silly; is this your land of Canaan that you talk'd of, that flowed with strong beer and chinees of beef?

*Lurch.* Have patience, old fiery face, thy nose shall have comfort presently—

*Carb.* Patience! demme, Dick, which way now shall I come by my money?—You know I love you, you roaring young dog, you know I do;—but here, now, here's a hundred pounds due for clean claret besides money lent, hard neat money—Reckonings paid, coach hire, suppers at your lodging, and ladies fees.—How the devil do you imagine, now, Dick Lurcher, that I shall pay the merchant—Why, you will force me to break and turn gentleman—It will never do.

*Long.* Sir, I would in the most submissive manner imaginable—

*Lurch.* So, so, what! all upon the hunt at once—One word, gentlemen.

*Long.* You know very well the last tie-up I sold you was as light and bright as silver, and as strong as wire, with a fine flowing, large open curl; I reckon you but twelve pieces for it; and upon my soul, my Lord Lanthorn Joul would have paid me as much for it in ready gold.

*Lurch.* And why wou'd you not take his money?

*Long.* Because it did not suit his complexion.

*Lurch.* Why what was that to thee, puppy.

*Long.* Ah, Sir, his dark olive face would have thrown a shade upon the brightness of the hair; I should have lost all all my credit. Now, Sir, if a gentleman does but wear one's work well, and become it—I must needs say that for your worship.

*Lurch.* Well, gentlemen, here you are, and I thank you for your attendance to my uncle's, I

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with I hast interest enough in my own person to desire you to walk in and refresh: but that is impossible. If you will agree to a project I have, and be content to act your parts in it, I will engage you all a lodging, and the best entertainment in the house: nay, perhaps your money too.

*Sneak.* I pray you what is your project, Mr. Lurcher? tho' I own I have no great opinion of projects, or projectors.

*Carb.* Demme, Dick, what is it? I love projects and whims wonderfully.

*Long.* I always said, upon my soul I did always affirm, that he was a very fine gentleman; tho' really I hope this project will produce a bed and a supper.

*Lurch.* Doubt it not, gentlemen: you and all the world know the character of Sir John English: he is excessively fond of quality, and piques himself upon being the most hospitable man in the county.

*Carb.* And what then?

*Lurch.* Why then I have a mind to put the change upon him.

*Carb.* Change upon him! how?

*Lurch.* Why, I will be a man of quality; I'll clap a blue ribbon cross my shoulders, and if you will assist me so far, if you will condescend so low as to be thought part of my equipage, why we will come rattling to his gates, and be receiv'd with as much joy and ceremony as if we were really what we appear'd.

*Carb.* Egad, I approve it wonderfully—We'll revel in October and roast-beef.

*Long.* Upon my soul, a very elegant design—You'll wear your best bag?

*Sneak.* But how will this help us to our money, Mr. Lurcher?

*Carb.* Why, his lordship will take the knight to picquet after supper, and bite him.

*Lurch.* No, no, Sir John never plays; I have a more honourable design than that, I assure you.

*Carb.* What is it? out with it, my little bully boy.

*Lurch.* Why, when all the family are fast asleep, we will clap on our masking suits and vizors—

*Carb.* And rob the house; very good.

*Sneak.* Oh, laud! rob the house; why, what do you think I'd be hang'd for your projects!

*Lurch.* No, my hoghead of iniquity, no; we will bind them in their beds, and one another afterwards, and yet not rob the house of a shilling.

*Carb.* To what purpose should you bind them, then?

*Lurch.* Don't enquire further beforehand—I beg you only to trust me with the conduct of this affair—I'll venture my life I shall bring you all off safe: I have in our coach, which stands by the road-side, every thing that can be necessary for the execution of our design.—Nay, nay,—don't let your courage sink, now we are upon action, lads—

*Sneak.* I desire to be excus'd; I will not engage in it.

*Carb.* I'll slice you if you mutter, I'll demolish—What! do you mutiny? Go on, Dick, we'll follow you to the end of the world.

*Lurch.* Along, then, my lads of mettle; be firm and united, and I will be answerable for the success.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, the Court-yard to Sir John English's House;  
*Sir John unbutton'd without his Hat, and Timothy Shacklefigure his Steward.*

*Sir John.* Good now! good now, Timothy! have you enquir'd what is become of cousin Betty all this day—and her companion, her little gossiping tittle-tattle friend—Hah, Timothy!

*Shackle.* An't I shall please your worship's worship, after the most painful inquisition in pursuance

of your worship's commands, I am not able to discover what your worship might—

*Sir John.* Prythee don't worship me so much, but for form sake, Timothy, tell me whither they are gone?

*Shackle.* Really that I cannot say, but the two young ladies were seen to walk forth early this morning with our very wise neighbour, farmer Freehold.

*Sir John.* So! but they left word they would return.

*Shackle.* I am not able particularly to affirm so much.

*Sir John.* Now the pox take thee, for a formal Anno Domini blockhead.

*Tim.* Give me leave to assure your worship, that without form or order—

*Sir John.* Tell me where they are gone, or I'll break thy strange pate.

*Tim.* Really, if your worship bruises me unto death, I shall most willingly perish for the truth, nor will I discover more unto your worship than I know.

*Sir John.* Get out o' my sight, you confounded multiplication puppy; yet stay a little. This fellow ruffles me so every day with his most abominable circumbendibus phrases—Well, cousin Betty is a fine girl, she has two thousand pounds a year.—

Ah, if my nephew Dick were not the most profligate rogue—But he may reform one time or other; she will never marry without my advice, that is certain.—Hark thee, thou numerical coxcomb: enquire if they expect the girls home at supper; I'll take a turn or two in the hall. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Lurcher and four of his Creditors as the Equipage of a Nobleman, and Vultur as his Running Footman.

*Sneak.* Laud, my heart sinks: I sweat and tremble already; I shall never hold out.

*Carb.* You pin-hearted puppy, recal your courage, or I'll demolish you. What, would you ruin our whole affair?

*Sneak.* Well, dear Carbuncle, be peaceable, I will strive.

*Lurch.* Tom Vultur, how does his grace become me? does the man of quality sit easy on the rack?

*Vult.* Admirably; you look as if you were made for a blue ribbon.

*Lurch.* And you flatter me as if I wore one.—To business, lads, to business—Do you, Tom Vultur, you who represent my running footman, trot before and prepare the old knight to receive us. If I can carry my design in this habit and equipage—

[*Exit Vultur.*]

*Carb.* We'll drink, and wench, and rear eternally, our whole lives shall run round in a circle of mirth.

*Lurch.* Joy shall be the jack, pleasure the bias, and we'll roll after happiness to the last moment of life.

*Carb.* Without one rub in the carpet, boys.

*Long.* With your favour, squires, how comes this Sir John English, who treats and entertains all, and is so very proud of being hospitable, to take no care of you? You say, you never personally offended him.

*Lurch.* Never; but I'll tell you: my father, his sister's husband, died two thousand pounds in his debt, for which he religiously determin'd to punish me his heir. At my father's death I was ten years old, but from that time no intercession could prevail with this most obstinate old male to approach to see me. But we have no time to lose in words. Come on, my boys, now let us give order for the coach to drive gently up the hill.—By this time Sir John, I hope, is ready to receive us. [*Exeunt.*]

Sir John English walking in his Hall: Vultur comes blowing in as a Running Footman.

Vult. Hih—Phu! phu! with your pardon, Sir, with you: pardon; phu! phu!

Sir John. How now, pumps, dimity, and sixty miles a day! whose greyhound are you?

Vult. Phu! phu! do you know, or can you give me any information? phu!

Sir John. Stand still and breathe, puppy; I'll walk a turn or two till your bellows are in order.

Vult. Can you tell me, I say, if my lord duke be come in yet?

Sir John. Thy lord duke! pr'ythee who is thy lord duke, friend?

Vult. I thought every body knew my lord: his Grace the Duke of Gasconade; his youngest son bears the title of Lord Bre, and his eldest is Marquis of Banington by the courtesy of England.

Sir John. Art sure he will alight here! I should be proud to entertain his grace; but I fear thou art mistaken.

Vult. Do you think so, Sir? By your leave, Sir. *Going.*

Sir John. Passion o' my fellow, why Pumps, I say, come back.

Vult. What is your pleasure, Sir?

Sir John. How happy should I be to entertain his grace. Did not his grace name the house with the great turret o' top?

Vult. No, Sir, no!

Sir John. Nor did not you hear him mention the velvet cushions in my little parlour?—Nor my large gilt candlesticks?

Vult. Upon my honour, no.

Sir John. Your honour, scab!—Nor no word dropt about the hangings in the great chamber?

Vult. Not a word. *[Running off, Sir John holds him.]*

Sir John. A pox confine thee! This fellow was born with a whirrigig in his heels. Stand still, you loofy seven miles an hour rascal.

Vult. If you stop me a second longer you ruin me.

Sir John. Was there no talk of a plentiful board, open house-keeping, and the good old English hospitality reviv'd somewhere hereabout?—hah!

Vult. Now you come a little nearer the matter.

Sir John. But now in one word—and indeed a question I should have ask'd before—Whom did he send you to?

Vult. To Sir John English, Sir.

Sir John. I am he, you round-about knave, you scipid ch, I am Sir John English—Well, and will his grace be here?—I am overjoy'd—nobody; no, nobody of any degree or quality, that is to say—pass'd by the house—Nobility entertains like me—Well; well; well;—there is a kind of a grace, an art, a manner in these things, which so naturally slips from me—Godso, I forget myself—Where are my servants? What, John Pippin, John!

Serv. Did your worship call?

Sir John. Bid that figurative fool Timothy Shackles, Robin Marrowbone the cook, and Doublejug the butler, and Dorothy and Cicely, and all my servants come hither instantly; I must speak with them all—Here, give this fustian rascal a horn o' beer and a crust—Well, and how does his grace, good now? I never saw him in my life.

Vult. My lord has travell'd these five years, an' it please your good worship.

Sir John. Travell'd! good now!—A cup o' beer and a crust, there. The fellow's a fool, I think.

Enter Steward, Cook, Butler, Cicely and Dorothy.

Sir John. Here Marrowbone, Robin, Robin, some rare ducks, a virgin pullet, a few pigeons, a bit of

mutton, or something or other.—Dorothy, air the great chamber, Dorothy, the fine sheets for his grace's bed: you understand me! The Holland curtains for the damask bed, edg'd with point: up with 'em; up with 'em:—unpaper the screens, the sconces, and the handirons.

*[As Sir John gives Orders to his Servants, Vultur and another Servant are drinking and complimenting on one side.]*

Enter Servant.

Serv. An' it please your worship, there's a nobleman and all his servants just alighted at the great gate.

Sir John. Godso; godso; we shall be in a fearful hurry—quickly, quickly—So, there, there—His grace, I profess, has surpriz'd me, taken me so unprepared.

Enter Lurcher as a Duke, with his Equipage; runs up to Sir John, and salutes him.

Lurch. Sir John English, I am your most faithful and obedient servant: I could by no means have excus'd myself, if I had pass'd by, and not paid my respects here.

Sir John. Ah, my lord, I am your poor unworthy servant; all I can say is, your grace is most spaciouly welcome.

Lurch. You have a fine house here, Sir John.

Sir John. A dog-hole, may it please your grace, a mere dog-hole; I have a clean oed or so, a bottle or two of good wine for a particular; I brew with the best malt, and can pretend to a bit of good mutton, or so—We shall starve your grace—but your grace's goodness—

Lurch. Ever hearty, Sir John; the happiest creature breathing (that is your character) when your friends are round you.

Sir John. Good now! good now! your grace is pleasant—Will your grace taste a glass of old hock—with a little, little dash of palm, before you eat?

Lurch. By no means, Sir John. Upon my word, you have a fine country round you, a noble estate.

Sir John. No, no, no, my Lord; what with taxes, repairs, bad tenants, parish charges, and so forth, a poor pittance—a poor pittance—Will your grace have a Seville-orange squeezed into a glass of noble racy old canary? What does your grace think of that? Aye, I believe that—or a glass of your right Southam cyder, sweetened with a little old mead, and a hard toast?

Lurch. Not one drop before I eat, tho' you could treat me with liquid gold. Why, you live here as if all things were in common without labour or money, like Adam in Paradise.

Sir John. Yes, an' it please your grace, with all my beasts about me. I have a heart, that is all I can boast; I have a heart. Well, well—What news? What news at London? I have a nephew there—I have not seen the profligate these ten years. I beg your grace not to entreat for him, his father served me scurvily; no, no; what o' that? what o' that?

Enter a Servant with Sack and Toast on a Silver. Your Grace must taste one glass of sack, 'tis the custom o' the place; it will warm your stomach. Come, come—Ah, this nephew of mine has been a wild lad, very wild. Belike your grace might know him, for he kept company o' the best. Ah, who but Dick Lurcher! Well, he has, tho' he be but my sister's son, much of my blood in him, that he has. He is like to have all when I die. The wherefore shall have all—I love him—but he shall never find it while I live.

Lurch. 'Tis something wonderful, that you can doot upon this nephew of yours, and make so pre-



tion for him. Has he any fortune of his own?

*Sir John.* Not a shilling, Sir. All spent. Do you mark me? Laud! he, Sir! why he is a wit, and a rake, and a gamester; he has twenty trades besides women. O' my conscience, he lives upon women. The boy has a fine eye, he has my eye.—He shall not have a groat while I live—but when I die—

*Lurch.* I must have a small matter while you live, dear uncle. [*Aside*]

*Sir John.* What's your grace's pleasure? My ear did not rightly lay hold on your last words.

*Lurch.* I say, you should allow him a small matter while you live.

*Sir John.* No, no; let him look out sharp; sharp; he will know better how to manage when I am laid. Come, come, good now, I see supper is going thro' the hall. Will your grace give me leave? Do you hear, take care his grace's equipage want nothing. I will shew your grace the way. [*Exeunt.*]

### A C T III.

*Enter Lurcher and his Equipage.*

*Lurch.* SO, now to our business, friends. Where are the masking suits?—Well, gentlemen, I beg leave only to repeat what I said before, be honest and you shall all be safe, have every penny that I owe, and a present into the bargain; but you'll hang yourselves and me too if you purloin a sixpence. I have a particular reason for this sham robbery, which will help me to execute my design with honour and safety.

*Carb.* Oh, I'll be very honest; don't suspect me, my little bully.

*Long.* Indeed, squire, this way of robbing is quite out of our way.

*Sneak.* I do not like it, 'tis so like robbing.—Dear squire, turn me out of the house—We shall certainly be taken and hanged.

*Lurch.* Carbuncle, bind all fast: terrify much and hurt little, that's your way.

*Carb.* Well, well, we'll do our best.

*Lurch.* Now, ceremonious uncle, with your good worship's leave, I hope to borrow from your awkward generosity a little ready-money, however.—But to business, my friends, to business; you all know your several appointments; away. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE changes.

*Enter Vultur with a Pistol, thrusting in Shacklefigure in his Shirt and Breeches.*

*Vult.* Your money, your money, dog-bolt.

*Tim.* Really I never part with money without a receipt.

*Vult.* You rascal, a receipt! when did you ever hear of a receipt given by a gentleman of our profession?

*Tim.* Dear Sir, only let it be then by way of memorandum, that it may appear in my accounts, and that his worship may be satisfied what you shall receive of me in a violent manner.

*Vult.* Villain, mention one word more of your memorandums and accounts and I'll shoot you thro' the head for understanding arithmetic. Oons, Sir, the nine figures are all authorized thieves.

*Tim.* No, Sir, with all submission, they are not thieves, but guardians of estates.

*Vult.* Dog-bolt! must I drive a pellet through your skull to confound your figures?

*Tim.* Ah, Sir, I do not insist upon it—Ah, spare my life, and I'll confess all the money and the plate.

*Vult.* In, in then, dismal, and I'll give you bond for the money. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Carbuncle, bawling Doublejug after him, very drunk, and Sneak and Longbottom at a distance.*

*Doub.* Are you not ashamed to bind an honest man hand and foot, who can neither stand nor go?

*Carb.* Rot you, do you prate?

*Doub.* Yes, Sir, I'm given to talk in my cups.

*Carb.* Where's your plate, your drunken sot, your plate?

*Doub.* My plate, Sir, why, [*Hiccups.*] why it is, it is—

*Carb.* Where is it?

*Doub.* Why it is—to tell you the truth it is locked up.

*Carb.* Demme, the keys, or I'll slice October.

*Sneak.* I beg you, Sir, to make no resistance, I intreat you.

*Long.* Upon my soul, Sir, if you don't comply with our request, you will be very roughly treated.

*Doub.* I thank you very kindly, but I don't care for drinking a drop more.

*Carb.* Give me the keys of the cellar, or by Gogmagog I'll slice you, hash you, carbonade you, pickle you, pepper you, salt you, broil you, and eat you.

*Doub.* Keep your temper, friend; there they are. I suppose you have a mind to draw your own liquor.—Let me recommend the third hoghead on the right—Ay, that was the hoghead that John and I stuck to to-night; 'tis fine, smooth, mellow, stinging liquor.

*Carb.* Here, lace the sot's arms, and turn him into the buttery again. [*Exit Carb.*]

*Doub.* Do your pleasures with me, honest gentlemen; tho' it runs strangely in my head that I shall dream of thieves.

[*Exit Doub. led by Sneak and Long.*]

*Enter Lurcher and Carbuncle, with Sir John bound in an old-fashioned Night-Gown and Cap, and the rest of the Equipage of Lurcher.*

*Sir John.* Gentlemen—for Heaven's sake, gentlemen—'tis very well; I am bound hard enough.

*Lurch.* Death, Sir, your money. We come for money.

*Sir John.* Is that all you come for? Why what a beast was I to unfurnish myself, to put out my money but yesterday! Alas, poor gentlemen! What shift shall I make for you? Pray call again some other time when I may be better provided.

*Lurch.* Oons, Sir, don't trifle—your money.

*Carb.* Brimstone and fire—What do you bam us?

*Sir John.* No, Sir, pardon me, I don't bam you. If you had come, as they say, in a civil way—Pie upon't, a gentleman would scorn to rob a house in such a manner.

*Lurch.* Clap a gag in his mouth there—What do you suffer the old dog to chatter for?—Pluck out his tongue—or knock his teeth down his throat with an ounce of lead.

*Carb.* Furies and firebrands—what do you bam us, you old prig?

*Sir John.* I don't, dear Sir—Ah, dear, sweet Sir, I do not, I do not bam you—only—and if it were your honour's good pleasures, I would intreat you for some small civility—I have a man of quality in my house, and I would not for the world that his grace should be disturbed.

*Lurch.* Thunder and lightning, Sir—Do you imagine we have any respect for a lord—no, no, we have secured his grace, he and all his equipage are bound to their good behaviour, I can tell you that.

*Sir John.* Who! my lord! What have you bound his grace—Irreparably lost, ruined, undone—I'll have you all hanged—I'll never forgive you. What I bound his grace! Ill-manner'd brutes, to misuse and disturb a man of quality; and in my house, too.

*Lurch.* Carry him in, bind him to the couch in the bed-chamber, and if he is noisy gag him.

[*Exit Sir John, guarded by Carb.*  
So, this is virtue indeed; virtue deserving a reward, to have power to do wrong and not use it—Well, gentlemen, preserve your honours as you have begun, and you'll all deserve statues. Now to our business; let one of us bind all the rest; do you mind me, about it then—*for*, harkee, 'tis absolutely necessary that this nobleman and all his followers should be found bound in their beds.

*Vult.* Admirable, that will secure us from all suspicion; but if we bind one another, how will the last man be bound?

*Lurch.* Why you, Vultur, shall escape; you may be supposed well enough, like a drowsy footman, to be forgot in your litter; there's your excuse—but so soon as ever you have bound us, whip off your mask and your mantle, and unbind the knight. Let me see, 'tis now break of day; to business, to business, lads.

[*E. eunt.*

#### SCENE, Sir John's Bed-Chamber.

*Sir John bound to a Couch.*

*Sir John.* What—help—help—I thieves! Murder! Will nobody come near me? Well, well, is there's any virtue in hemp I'll have these rogues hanged. At such a time as this to disturb the tranquillity of his grace's slumbers, as I may so say. Ay, ay, I am bound fast enough. The condition of this obligation—

*Enter Vultur.*

*Odso, Pumps—how comest thou to escape, Pumps? I am heartily glad to see thee, in troth.*

*Vult.* They left me snoring in the garret, and either they did not see or regard me—Pray let me assist your worship.

*Sir John.* Would I had lain in the garret too—but nothing afflicts me so much, honest Geometrical, as the affront in binding his grace. Ah, that cuts my heart. [*Vultur loosing Sir John.*] So, so; very well, very well. How shall I approach my lord? I am not able to look him in the face.

*Enter Lurcher with his Hands bound, as from his Chamber.*

*Lurch.* Whp's there?

*Sir John.* Good-morrow to your grace.

*Lurch.* Good-morrow, Sir John; I would give you my hand, but I can't command it. I suppose, Sir, this is the courtesy of the country.

[*Sir John unbinds him.*

*Sir John.* Alas, alas, this grieves me more than all, to see your grace thus uncourteously used.

*Lurch.* Can you guess who they may be, Sir John?

*Sir John.* I don't know, an it please your grace—but sure they were the most ungentleman-like thieves—

*Lurch.* These fellows were some who know and use your house, I warrant.

*Sir John.* Very like, very like! Well, well, this comes of keeping open house.

*Lurch.* I made myself known to one of them, and gave him my honour I would not discover him.

*Sir John.* You did, my lord?

*Lurch.* Yes; and do you think the insolent slave would trust me upon my word?

*Sir John.* He would not?

*Lurch.* No faith, he asked my pardon; he told me lords promises were mortal, and commonly died in the birth, or soon after.

*Sir John.* Insupportable villains!

*Vult.* I am sorry your grace has lost— [*To Lurch.*

*Sir John.* Hush, hush. [*To Vultur aside.*

*Lurch.* What have I lost? Speak!

*Sir John.* A good night's sleep, for— [*To Vult.*

*Vult.* Your rest, my lord, this troublesome night.

*Lurch.* That's true; no matter. My clothes there. I'll into my chamber and dress, and wait on you immediately, Sir John.

[*Sir John stops Vultur as he is following him.*

*Sir John.* Harkee, friend, what has thy lord duke lost? Speak softly.

*Vult.* No more than his grace may easily spare.

*Sir John.* That is not the thing. Pray tell me.

*Vult.* Since your worship will needs know, they took about three hundred pieces of gold, and one hundred pounds in silver, or thereabouts, out of his grace's strong box.

*Sir John.* Codso—Co so—Ay, ay—my honour's concerned.—I charge you, I command you don't let his grace know it—Pray bid my steward Timothy come to me; 'tis fit I repair him. What! in my house!

*Enter Timothy.*

*Tim.* So, please your worship, Thomas Maunder hath sent your worship the two hundred pounds for the renewing of his lease.

*Sir John.* Villains! traitors—

*Tim.* And John Budge hath paid his Martlemas rent in arrears, and sent your worship the turkeys.

*Sir John.* Coxcomb, to trouble me with business now. Come hither, Timothy, what have I lost in this scurvy affair here?

*Tim.* Really, upon the strictest inquisition I cannot find that your worship has lost the value of one single sixpence in the whole affair.

*Sir John.* What dost thou say? I am amazed.

*Tim.* 'Tis truth—upon a second casting I find all my cash is numerically the same it was last night—and Doublejug hath all his plate I can assure your worship; there is not a tea-spoon missing—I believe their design was wholly upon his grace.

*Sir John.* Portraits! ragamuffins! as if their whole scheme was purposely to affront him, and him only.—Why it looks, Timothy, as if I was in the plot. Harkee, Timothy, what ready-money is there in the house?

*Tim.* Three hundred pounds in silver, and two hundred pounds in gold.

*Sir John.* I could wish you had three hundred pounds in gold—Well, well, we must make shift. Do you hear, take the two hundred pieces of gold and two hundred pounds in silver presently, and watch carefully—carefully, I say, for an opportunity to slip it into his grace's strong box privately; tho', Timothy, you must do it privately.

*Tim.* What would your worship slip it into his grace's strong box, did you say? What must I slip?

*Sir John.* The money, oaf; the money, I say; the same sum to a farthing. I charge you let no creature see you.

*Tim.* Give me leave, in the shortest method imaginable, to reason this affair.

*Sir John.* Codso! let me have you do it instantly—What the good year—

*Tim.* I say only that your worship has lost something that I did not apprehend before, and that is your senses.

*Sir John.* Impudent varlet; do it, or I'll turn your mathematical countenance out of my doors this moment [*Exit Timothy.*] What, in my house!

*Enter Lurcher and Vultur.*

*Lurch.* I overheard him just now; he ordered his steward to place that sum in my strong box, in the room of what he supposed I had lost.

*Vult.* He did so, the same exactly, only more silver than gold.

*Lurch.* He prevents my witness; anticipates my evidence. This old gentleman has a generous mind,

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and however he is disposed to me, there's something great and open in his character. This manner of treatment makes me even disdain the success of my enterprize—Ha, here he comes! I tremble at the sight of him now.—Sir John, your most obedient; I am infinitely obliged to you for the favours I have received—I am sorry my affairs oblige me to leave you so soon.

*Sir John.* You cover me with blushes—Yet your grace will, you must do me the honour to take a short homely meal before you travel.

*Lurch.* I roll away thirty miles before dinner, Sir.

*Sir John.* Just snatch a bit, as they say—What, Robin! Tim!

*Lurch.* I shall run away abruptly, if you press me.

*Sir John.* If your grace will have it so—Yet let me perish, my lord, if I know how to look your grace in the face about the business of last night—'Tis presumptuous in me to ask forgiveness.

*Lurch.* I forgive you from my soul, Sir John; upon my honour I do; I am sensible how much you suffer every way.

*Sir John.* Then I remain to the extreme moment of this frail life your grace's humble debtor.

*Lurch.* I fear, Sir John, I shall be obliged to trespass upon your faith for the credit of some ready-money to carry me home; this accident has quite unfurnished me, it seems.

*Enter Longbottom, who whispers Vultur.*

*Sir John.* Your grace may command me entirely, and I am proud—

*Vult.* My lord, John came in just now to tell me, that as they were about to pack up the strong box they found all your grace's money within it.

[To Lurcher.

*Lurch.* How! I am surprized, indeed! The money within it!

*Vult.* Only the species changed, and one hundred pounds in silver more instead of gold.

*Lurch.* How! I can hardly believe it! what, are we in fairy land here, Sir John? [Vult. whispers Lurch.

*Sir John.* I am afraid Timothy did not take due care. [Aside.

*Lurch.* I suspected it, truly—Sir John, this is unkind—my servant tells me your steward was observed to place the money there, and when he was examined, said he did it by your order—You see I would make use of my credit with you: I should not have been put to any inconvenience by my lodging here—generous Sir John—Well, since it is so, give me leave, however, to give you security for the money, and three months hence, when I return from the north, I'll call and repay you.

*Sir John.* By no means; you confound me, you kill me with confusion; what, is not your grace's honour sufficient?

*Lurch.* But we are all mortal, you know.

*Sir John.* Dear your grace, excuse me—Dear your grace, spare me.

*Lurch.* Well, Sir, I am your humble debtor; if ever your come to court again—

*Sir John.* Ah, my lord!

*Lurch.* Is the coach ready?

*Vult.* 'Tis at the gate, my lord.

*Lurch.* Sir John, yours—Pray take particular care next time a man of quality lies in your house that no thieves disturb him.

*Sir John.* Ah, my good lord!

*Lurch.* Not a step farther.

*Sir John.* Pray give me the honour to attend your grace to your coach.

*Lurch.* No, no, by no means.

*Sir John.* 'Tis my duty—Good your grace.

*Lurch.* You will be obeyed—Remember only

when I see you at Barmington—I shall command in my turn.

*Sir John.* Your grace overwhelms me with your goodness. [Exit.

## A C T IV.

*Enter Modely and Heartwell.*

*Modely.* WAS ever any thing so agreeable?

*Heart.* What palace could have entertained us like this cottage?

*Modely.* The blunt old man gave us a meal, plain and undisguised.

*Heart.* Artless and honest, like himself. Did you observe the sweetness and purity of this little dwelling?—The linen smelt of lavender and roses—The honey suckles hid the light of our small casement—

*Modely.* And mixed their odours with the sharp morning air, and waked me early.

*Heart.* Why, did you sleep?

*Modely.* Like a whiptop. Did not you?

*Heart.* Ah, no; my heart was dancing the galloping nag; my spirits were in arms, and all the mobility of my blood roared out incessantly, Flora, Flora,

*Modely.* What! then you are really in love; that is, à la Romantique.

*Heart.* So much in love, my heart beats quick at her name; I have her constantly before my eyes; I could fight for her, I could die for her, I could marry her.

*Modely.* What, you have a mind to put your passion to a violent death. Marry her!—Do so, do so; 'tis a certain cure.

*Heart.* Be not so severe; her beauty, George, will make my joys immortal.

*Modely.* I can't believe either in the immortality of her beauty, or your passion.

*Heart.* Look on her then, and be converted.

*Modely.* Convert thyself, lad, and don't look so like the picture of heigh-ho! [Exit.

*Enter Flora.*

*Flora.* My uncle, Sir, would speak with you—Nay, no more love, I intreat, I petition. I know by your looks what you mean. Come, leave this whimsical dumb cant of sighing and ogling, and tell me, in plain English, what you'd have.

*Heart.* Could not you help one to a little ready beauty?

*Flora.* What would you give for a small purchase that way?

*Heart.* Heart for heart, my dear.

*Flora.* That was the old way, they say. Before money was in fashion, they used to barter in kind.

*Heart.* Let us renew that honest custom in the age of innocence and love.

*Flora.* Have you a clear title to the thing you would sell? That heart of yours, I warrant, has been mortgaged over and over.

*Heart.* Humph! It has been a little dipped; but I have always honourably redeemed it, child.

*Flora.* Have you a lawful assignment from your last mistress?

*Heart.* I was as free as air till I beheld those eyes. [Bowing very low.

*Flora.* Ah, that humble, killing bow!—Go on. Now I know you are to talk of chains, and daggers, and flames, and diving, and darts.

*Heart.* Is it possible to hide a passion, which, tho' my tongue is silent, breaks out in every look and motion?

*Flora.* Wonderful pretty this! But, Sir, I know the natural whim of the mind of man; 'tis as incon-



stant as a turnstile, his heart's a tennis-ball, his inclination's the racket, and his passions drive it round the world.

*Heart.* Dare only to try me, and if you like me not, discharge me.

*Flora.* She deserves to be robbed who takes a servant that brings a certificate of his being a thief.

*Heart.* 'Tis not engraven here, I hope.

*Flora.* Yes, truly; there is a sort of a faithless, loving, Lissnon, lying air, that hangs upon your features, and frightens me terribly.

*Heart.* Then propose your own security; bind me as you please.

*Flora.* Agreed. Suppose then I liked you well enough to make a husband of you; would you marry me?—Look ye there—confounded—astonished at once—Mentioning the word only, has put the man into a cold sweat; I profess.

*Heart.* People who marry for love, my dear, are like hogs who give bonds with interest for large sums of ready-money, and squander the principal; so in a little time are both beggars and prisoners.

*Flora.* I had rather be a beggar afterwards, than a bubble beforehand. But go on to your purpose, Sir.

*Heart.* I would have you leave this four old man, and this rustic cot; and take your flight with me and love—Love shall conduct us with his purple wings, joys shall meet joys in circles, and new pleasures chase the swift hours away. Thou shalt be dearer to me than any wife can be.

*Flora.* So, 'tis out at last. What, then I am to be your mistress only, your pretty *bella favorita*, your little private hunting-seat; have every inconvenience of a wife, with the scandal of a wench, and perhaps be forced to cluck a brood of illegal chickens after me, and peck about the parish for my subsistence?

*Heart.* What horrible ideas dost thou form! No, my dear, it shall not be within my power to wrong you; I will settle two hundred pounds a year upon you for life, and provide for all our children.

*Flora.* With a sham lawyer, and a counterfeit settlement;

*Heart.* Chuse your own lawyer, take your own security, make your own trustees; you shall have an inheritance in my heart and my land as firm as if you were born to it.

*Flora.* To be serious, then, since you are so, I'll tell you, all the inheritance I boast or wish for, is this low, humble cottage, and a mind, I hope a virtuous mind, that cannot, even in this situation, bear dishonour. Take back your worthless trifle of a heart, and your more worthless promises, and know, I scorn as much to yield to the mean bargain of your hiveling passion, as you do to submit to honourable love.

[Going.]

*Heart.* Stay, you shall stay—Let me but think a moment—

*Flora.* Think then, ungrateful man, what 'tis you do. My father, whose prop I am, the stay of his old age, taught me, with pious care, to tread the paths of virtue; how would it tear the strings of his old heart to see me fallen at once to shame and infamy? You call yourself a gentleman, and say, the laws of faith and honour, when they're broken, ask life for recompence; the lye is death; yet you would falsify your trust to him, defraud him of his treasure in his child, inhospitably murder your good host, the man whose house you entered with a trust that would to common thieves, under these limitations, be sacred and inviolable.

*Heart.* Oh! thou hast touch'd my soul! I feel thy words; a conscious pang stabs thro' my heart, and covers me with shame. Yet, Flora, yet I hope

you will forgive me, when you think how strongly we are biassed to what is wrong. Custom, family, fortune, I know not what terrible words, make me fear to suffer in opinion only.

*Flora.* I know the disparity of our fortunes; I know you fear your family, and name should suffer. Believe me, Sir, they suffer more when you but tempt an honest mind from virtue.

*Heart.* Oh, Flora, Flora, thou hast conquered! I own my crime, and humbly beg you will forgive it. Thy words, bright excellence, charm like thy beauty; thy soul's refined without society or court; nature has form'd thee fair as her own humble lilies; no family can mend, no education teach, no habit improve your manners.

*Flora.* "Oh, man, for flattery and deceit renown'd."

*Heart.* In you I see the most perfect virtue clothed in all the charms of the most elegant form; in you I see all that we know of heaven, of those celestial lights that move for ever, virtue and beauty joined. Thus let me kneel, thus lowly at your feet, and ask your hand, your hand and heart in marriage; let the priest now join us. Will you, dare you trust your convert?

*Flora.* Away with this! Think seriously, seriously, Sir. Can you for ever love me, for your life? A poor country girl, without a portion, without one penny for posterity? Take time, and think on't.

*Heart.* I would marry thee, tho' I wrought with my hands for thy daily support. My whole soul, all my wishes are centered in thee.

*Flora.* Ay, but when we are married they'll move, eccentrically again. Marriage is a tedious journey in a heavy road; many an honest fellow, who set out briskly at first, has been heartily tired before he reached his inn at night.

*Heart.* I must not, cannot, will not live without thee. Give me your hand; let me be yours for ever.

*Flora.* Come, Sir, I see you're a man of courage, and if my uncle consents—

*Heart.* I'll go in, and ask it without ceasing—But shall I then be sure of yours?

*Flora.* I don't know—But I think you do what you will with me. [Exit.]

Enter Modely.

*Mode.* I can't imagine where Heartwell is gone, nor can I find the girls. I have hunted every—

Ha, Miss! have I caught you?

Enter Aura.

*Aura.* Sir, the tea is ready.

*Mode.* Tea! Why, you live within doors as politely as the people of our world, as elegantly. This cottage is like a diamond in the quarry, all rough without, within all light and beauty. Does your father drink tea too?

*Aura.* No, Sir; his constant breakfast is a pipe and a pot of Otober.—But he expects us all this while.

*Mode.* Hold, hold! Why, do you think I'll be served in this manner?

*Aura.* What manner?

*Mode.* How well you kept your appointment last night, gypsey!

*Aura.* What appointment?

*Mode.* To meet me in the arbour at the lower end of the orchard, alone.

*Aura.* Pleasant! I meet a man at night in an arbour alone! Oh, hideous! What should I do there?

*Mode.* Do! Why, I was to have made love to you in soft nonsense, you were to have been very angry and very kind, and for I was to have ravished you with your own consent; that's all. Aht! a blush upon a half consent looks so sweetly by moon-light.

*Aura.* How came this wicked imagination into



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your head? *Mode.* In a dream, deary; 'tis pity it was not real.

*Aura.* Go, you're a devil.

*Mode.* You're an angel.

*Aura.* Be gone—I fly thee, Satan—*[Ex. running.]*

*Mode.* I'll follow thee to the world's end, thou temptation for a saint. *[Exit.]*

SCENE, the Green before the Cottage.

Enter Heartwell, Flora, and several Countrymen and Women.

*Heart.* My good neighbours, I thank you all for these favours. I hope you'll dine with me to-morrow. I beg you'll excuse me now. In the mean time, here is something to drink this lady's health.

*[Exeunt all but Heartwell and Flora.]*

*My wife!*—my dear!—I am now richer than the sea; I have a treasure in thee more valuable than what the earth contains.

Enter Shackelfigure.

How now! what solemn piece of formality, what man of wires is this, that moves towards us? He stirs by clock-work, like St. Dunstan's giants; he prepares to open his mouth, as if he could not speak without an order of court.

*Shack.* Save you, right worshipful Sir.

*Heart.* And you eke also.

*Shack.* Sir John English, my most bountiful lord and master, hearing by the mouth of common fame—

*Heart.* Common fame is a common liar, friend; you have your news from the worst hands.

*Shack.* Sir, you break the thread of my discourse.

*Heart.* Well, join it again, and go on.

*Shack.* Sir John English, my most bountiful lord and master, hearing, by the mouth of common fame, that you were joined in holy wedlock to the niece of his good tenant, Solomon Freehold, sends his wishes ambassadors by me, the humblest of his vassals, that you and your fair bride will be pleased to sup and consummate your marriage at his house.

*Heart.* Verily, thou hast well unfolded thy message; now plait it up carefully again, friend, and give my service to thy master, Sir John, and say, that my wishes are to be private for a night or two.

*Shack.* Sir, I shall report—or carry back your answer accordingly.

*Flora.* Stay, friend, stay a moment—*[To Heart.]* If I could prevail upon you, you should grant Sir John's request.

*Heart.* 'Twill interrupt our happiness. Noise is an enemy to transport. I am so covetous, I would have thee for ever alone.

*Flora.* But Sir John has always been to me the most obliging, kindest, best-natured man; at this time it would look like ingratitude to refuse him; Give me my request; 'tis the first I ever made. I'll go before and prepare the old gentleman to receive you, and prevent all ceremonious trouble. You'll be there in an hour.

*Heart.* I can deny thee nothing. Tell your master: I'll wait on him. *[Exeunt Shack. and Flora.]*

Enter Modely.

*Mode.* Ha, George! I was looking for you. What shall I do? You shall advise me. Shall I marry my dear little girl, or no?

*Mode.* To marry for love, my friend, is confining your whole body for the error of your eyes only.

*Heart.* Ay, but where one loves, one would keep a woman to one's self.

*Mode.* Ha, ha! keep a woman to one's self. He that purchases an estate where all the world take a right of common, may build churches for atheists, and almshouses for misers.

*Heart.* But a little legal inclosure is for the com-

fort of our lives; when the land has been carefully and virtuously cultivated.

*Mode.* Why, you don't really intend to marry this girl?

*Heart.* Really, I believe I shall.

*Mode.* Indeed! Ah, pretty!—Do'e, do'e, fling two thousand pounds a year away upon a cottage, Marian—take the refuse of a bumpkin to your marriage-bed, and after that be the cuckold of the plowman.

*Heart.* How! What?

*Mode.* Ay, ten to one but some finewy thresher, who has warmed her brisk blood at a hop or a wake, steps into your place, and delivers down a posterity of young flail-drivers, known by the name of Heartwell.

*Heart.* Fie, Modely! no more of this. You know her virtue is unfilled as her beauty; besides, her education has been above these clods.

*Mode.* Her education has been among them. But why should you marry her? Shew her some good man; promise her mountains, bargain for her, purchase her, run away with her, keep her two or three years, breed out of her—Why should you buy the whole piece, when you may have a suit for a family? Wear her a little, and then—

*Heart.* Sir, I bore your hasty reflections with temper, while I believed your meaning was friendly; but now I find you indulge your ill-nature at the expence of a virtuous woman.

*Mode.* Oh, oh! you are grave—that is, you are growing mad indeed, and begin to rattle your matrimonial chain.

*Heart.* I am talking of religion to a heretic, of morals to a libertine.

*Mode.* Well, well, then it shall have its toy. Did it cry for a wife? It shall be tied to it, if nothing else will do; like an idiot with a horn-book at his girdle. It shall have a ginger-bread wife too, but without any gilding.

*Heart.* Pr'ythee, George, don't make me angry with thee in earnest.

*Mode.* What is the matter with the man? Art thou mad? Thou art as uneasy as if thou wert already married, and had found the corn in the field, when you did not know the grain was sowed.

*Heart.* Why, then, to confess the honest truth, I am married.

*Mode.* Married! When?

*Heart.* Just now.

*Mode.* To whom?

*Heart.* To Flora.

*Mode.* Very good! And so you come to know, or seems, whether you shall give bond for the debt, when there's an execution upon the goods.

*Heart.* Well, George; but now you know my case, tell me, as a friend, only your opinion of what I have done.

*Mode.* Done! Pox, you have done a very silly thing; sold yourself for a waxen baby, a painted moppet, a gay, prating, party-coloured parakeet, which little master will play with till he is sick of it, and then in a gloomy mood be ready to twist its neck off. Ha, ha! a very pretty fellow, to make a vow to be always in the same mind. Oops! you look as if you walked upon your head, with your brains in your breeches.

*Heart.* Thou art so foolish thy imagination wonders what virtue is. There is no talking with that. —Come, go with me to Sir John's to supper, and be as much a wag there as now please.

*Mode.* No, I have other game in view—Farewell. —Yonder the stars are, there's a Madam! I'll have change; for it is not wicked to play with

ask such an unconscionable price as matrimony. [Ex. Modely re-enters with Aura.]

*Aura.* Oh, Lud! you have brought all the blood in my body into my face.

*Mode.* Colour is the life of beauty. Can you be angry with me for making you more handsome. I swear I will be ever faithful. Come, you little dear rogue; you shall trust me.

*Aura.* Never, never. Oh, lud! don't ask me. My heart beats as if it would break a way thro' my breast.

*Mode.* What, won't you trust me with a kiss?

*Aura.* That's a trifle. [Kisses her.] You're impudent.

*Mode.* You're idle.

*Aura.* I swear I'll cry out.

*Mode.* You'll expose yourself.

*Aura.* Lud, Sir! what do you mean?

*Mode.* To wrestle for a fall only. There's a couch in the next room will tell no tales. This way, my dear—[Struggling.] Nay, now you are a little fool.

*Aura.* [Getting one hand loose, strikes him.] I'll tear your eyes out. Help, help, for Heaven's sake! murder, murder.

*Enter Freehold, and two Threshers, who run up to*

*Modely, disarm and seize him.*

*Free.* Ah, ware haunches, ware haunches!—There.

—So, so; the hunt is safe. [Exit Aura.] What vicious cur is this, poaching by himself? What, my good friend, Mr. Modely? Why, thou art a very impudent fellow. What canst thou say for thyself now, ha?

*Mode.* Say! why, I say your kinfwoman here was very uncivil, and all that.

*Free.* You would have been too civil, and all that.

Come, bring him along; he shall have a fair race for it. Our moat, Sir, is somewhat wide, but not very clear; now, if you can out-run, and out-swim Towser, I believe you'll not make a hunting-feat of my house again in haste.

*Mode.* Sir, I expect to be treated as a gentleman.

*Free.* How?

*Mode.* Take off your bull-dogs; let me speak one word with you alone, and I'll tell you.

*Free.* Come on, Sir! I'll trust you; I'll give you more credit than you deserve.—Do you hear! stay without, that you may be ready when I call.

[Exit Country Fellows.] Well, Sir, what have you to say now, why sentence should not pass?

*Mode.* Say! why, I say, Sir, that what I did was according to the common law; that the common law is custom, and that it has been the custom.

time out of mind, for us young fellows, whose blood flows briskly, to use no ceremony with a wholesome cherry-cheek, whether on haycock, meadow, barn, or bed.

*Free.* Extremely well! and so you would have knocked her down, and ravished her.

*Mode.* A little agreeable force is absolutely necessary; it saves the woman's honour, and gives such an edge to the appetite—

*Free.* Aye. And so, having finished this honourable affair, that is, having robbed the poor girl of all that could be dear or valuable, having dishonoured her, disgraced yourself, and done an irreparable wrong; why, you could have hummed a tune, taken a pinch of snuff, sat down perfectly satisfied in the probity of the action, and have reconciled yourself to your own reflections with as much ease as you drink a dish of tea. What provokes you to this injustice?

*Mode.* Love, love and joy, old wormwood. I have made a league with my youth, to get the better of time; I have fast hold of his forelock, and won't let a moment pass without enjoyment.

—Impatient sense, and nature dies,

and Aye! is a second life supplier.

Gentle boy, then fill my cup.

A bumper, Cupid, fill it up

With youth, and wit, and noble fires,

Vigorous health, and young desires.

*Free.* This fellow's in a blaze; his blood has set him all in fire.

*Mode.* I love the whole sex, Sir; the beautiful I adore as angels; the ugly, as Incians do the devil, for fear; the witty persuade me, the innocent allure me, the proud raise my ambition, and the humble my charity; the coquette shows me a pleasing chase, the false virtue of the prude gives oil to my flame, and the good-natured girl quenches it. There's a pleasure in pursuing those that fly, and 'tis cowardly not to meet the fair-one that advances. Say what you will, I am in love; in love, old boy, from head to foot; I am Cupid's butt, and stand ready to receive his whole quiver.

*Free.* I'll tell thee what thou art; thou art a romance finely bound and gilt, and thy inside is full of silly love and lyes, senseless and showish.

*Mode.* And thou art a satire, as the title says, against vice and immorality. What, I think thou art the fourest old fellow that ever I met with.

You invite a man to your house here, and then deny him the only tit-bit he has a mind to.

*Free.* You have broke every social virtue, and yet impudently imagine you are in the character of a gentleman.

*Mode.* How, Sir! you grow scurrilous. [Going.]

*Free.* Nay, you shall hear me, or I'll recal my myrmidons; they wait my word, you know. A gentleman ought not to dare to think of doing wrong to any. His love, his friendship, his courage, his generosity, his religion, his word and his honour, should be inviolably bound to the strict laws of virtue.

*Mode.* This may be the picture of a saint; but for the character of a fine gentleman, 'tis as unlike it, my dear—

*Free.* As you are. Your love is lust, your friendship interest, your courage brutal butchery, your bounty usury, your religion hypocrisy, your word a lye, and your honour a jest.

*Mode.* Ha, ha! very concise and smart; but I take nothing ill of thee. Thou art like a frothy morning, sharp and wholesome. Dear Sir, your most obedient servant; you see I have stood your Jobation very patiently. And so, compliments being passed on both sides, I humbly take my leave.

*Free.* Hold, Sir, I demand satisfaction for the wrong you have done my family.

*Mode.* With all my heart, old boy; your time, place, and weapons. Will you use seconds?

*Free.* Aye, and thirds too, if you provoke me. Look ye, friend, according to the justest sentiments I can form of this affair, you ought to be knocked on the head, extinguished for the good of society, as I would one of my cattle that had got a distemper in his blood, which made him run a muck at the herd. But custom, that invades the rights of nature, and makes us act by senseless example, says you are a gentleman, and have a right to justify one wrong, by committing another.

*Mode.* Pox o' your preamble! come to the point, Sir.

*Free.* The young woman you have wronged has a servant, Sir, a young Oxonian, a lover of her's, who at present lives with his kinsman, Sir John above; he shall meet you, and bleed you for this fever. I know the young fellow loves her, and has spirit to do himself justice. I think that is the east you have for it. He shall meet you half an hour hence in the meadow behind the farm alone.

*Mode.* Odo!—Your bullies about you too? Well, Sir, I'll meet him.

*Free.* The young woman you have wronged has a servant, Sir, a young Oxonian, a lover of her's, who at present lives with his kinsman, Sir John above; he shall meet you, and bleed you for this fever. I know the young fellow loves her, and has spirit to do himself justice. I think that is the east you have for it. He shall meet you half an hour hence in the meadow behind the farm alone.

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*Free.* If you fail, I'll stick your name upon every tree in the parish, for a coward, a poltroon, that dares not fight in a wrong cause; and that is a greater reproach to a man of modern honour, than a thief or a murderer. [Exit Freehold.]

*Mode.* An ill-natured old puppy, to engage a man in a quarrel too—However, I think I am pretty well off, this is much better than the discipline of Towler and the ditch, or than my friend's matrimonial comfort; though 'tis very ugly, methinks, too, to fight upon an idle business here. But 'tis the fashion, the mode, and, as old Crabtree says, right or wrong, we are obliged to obey it. [Exit.]

## A C T V.

## SCENE, a Close behind the Farm.

*Enter Moody.*

*Mode.* A Fine evening, really, for a cool throat or two—Where is the warrior that is to enter and me here? 'Egad, I wish 'twas over; I don't like it; it fits but qualmishly upon my stomach. Oh! yonder he comes cross the stile—No, that's a boy, I think. I suppose he has sent some formal excuse; the women have locked him up, the country is raised, or the justices have sent their warrants forth to stop all military proceedings, and make up the matter over a cup of October.

*Enter Aura, in Boy's Cloaths.*

*Aura.* Your servant, Sir.

*Mode.* Yours, Sir.

*Aura.* I am invited hither, Sir, to do justice to an injured beauty, whom I have the honour to be well with—and I suppose you are my man.

*Mode.* Thy man, love; and what then.

*Aura.* Why, then, Sir, on the behalf of that fair one, I demand the honourable amends, Sir. To use violence to a lady is an affront not to be put up; to tear the boughs, and offer to haul down the fruit before it was consenting, kindly ripe—If you had climbed up the ladder of her affections, and gathered it regularly with the consent of the owner, there had been no harm done.

*Mode.* Ha! thou art a very pretty metaphorical prigster. Hark ye, child, go home presently, or I will gather a handful of nettles under that hedge, and whip thee most unmercifully.

*Aura.* Huh, huh! Goliath the second. Now he struts and bounces! Sir, I shall whip you thro' the guts. What are your weapons?

*Mode.* Nettle-tops, infant; nettle-tops.

*Aura.* What, are you for your country diversions of this sort? Flails, cudgels, scythes, back-swords, osen-towels, or wrestling? I have brought many a flouter man than you down, before now, with my Cornish hug. Or are you for the town gallantries, single rapier, sword and dagger, sword and pistol, single pistol, blunderbuss, demi-cannon, culverin, howitzer, mortar-piece, or barrel of gun-powder? I am ready, at any of these weapons, to wait your commands.

*Mode.* Look thee, thou impertinent insect, thou may'st be troublesome, tho' thou canst not be hurtful; therefore, if thou fliest about my face thus, I shall be forced to pat thee down with my hand, and tread thee out.

*Aura.* Homph!—You're very pert.

*Mode.* I am so. Pray, tell me, tho', what interest have you in this lady, that she has engaged your haughty littleness in her affairs?

*Aura.* Who, I, Sir? Oh, I have been her premier minister a great while. By her good will, she would not suffer any living thing to stick a pin about her besides me.

*Mode.* Indeed! and to thou art her play-fellow,

her gentle refreshment, her pretty pillow-boy, her afternoon's coral, and her tea at breakfast, her evening's slumber, and her morning's indolence.

*Aura.* You are superlatively smart. Sir, I shall give you to understand instantly, that the reputation of a lady is not thus impiously to be sported with—Oons, eat your words; down with them again this moment, or I'll ram the insolent epithets back again with the hilt of my sword.

*Mode.* Cool thyself, Narcissus; cool thyself, child; relieve thy reason with a dram of reflection. 'Tis the town talk: the whole village, and all the parishes round ring of it—I am sure thou wouldst not die a martyr to falsehood. Why, thy engagements there are known to every body; 'tis no secret, my prettiness.

*Aura.* Ay, Sir, 'tis true; but 'tis not to gallant to enter into particularities of that sort. Tho', as you say, indeed, I am sensible 'tis no secret. The affair has made a noise; the fury of the poor creature's passion did now and then blind her discretion. I think this is the seventh duel I have engaged in for her and Flora—the seventh; no, the eighth—there were three justices, two excisemen, a parson, and yourself—

*Mode.* Thou art a terrible little squib. What had Flora to do in this quarrel? What! you have had her too; hah?

*Aura.* Ah, Sir, she; but she is married. I am glad of it, faith, very glad of it. Poor man! your friend, I mean. I hope he is not apt to be jealous? If his son and heir steps into the world a month or two before the usual time, I could wish he would rather impute it to the forwardness of his boy, than the ill conduct of his wife.

*Mode.* Thou art the most impudent, wicked, little, bragging, lying son of a whore, that ever I met with.

*Aura.* Demme, Sir, son of a whore in your teeth!—What! Be-caus. I have relieved you, suffered you to breathe a minute or two longer, while I diverted you with my gallantries—you grow insolent.

*Mode.* Ha, ha! thou art a very potgun charged with air.

*Aura.* And thou art a wooden blunderbuss without any charge at all.

*Mode.* Thou most insignificant teasing terrier, thou ferret of a coney-warren—by heavens, if thou dost provoke me, I will cut thee into minced-meat, and have thee dished up for thy mistress's wedding-dinner.

[Modely draws, and advances towards Aura.]

*Aura.* [Advancing so, and presenting a pistol.] Put up your sword; put it up, I say—Deat—Sir, this instant, or you die! [Mode puts up his sword.] So, so—

*Mode.* Hah! What have you there tricks too, my little bully?

*Aura.* Very well; now you have obeyed me, I'll use you like a gentleman. You have a longer reach than I, and therefore I may not be so reasonable to engage with single sword. Here, take one of these; this, or this; which you please. [Presenting pistols.] You may change it, or draw it and recharge it, if you suspect my honour.

*Mode.* How are they loaded?

*Aura.* Equally, Sir, with a brace of balls.

*Mode.* What can be the meaning of all this? Sure the young dog is no in earnest. [Aside.]

*Enter Freehold.*

*Free.* Hey, my brave boy! my cock o' the game! my lad of mettle! my Cupid in arms! there, he stands his ground to an inch. I told you he would find you sport, my Covent-garden friend—All I can say is, he shoots flying nicely.

*Mode.* Hah! I am glad you are come, farmer: we were just going to be serious here. This little bluff hector will let nobody lie with your family, but



himself, it seems: pr'ythee let us make up this affair, old gentleman. Egad, if I am in the wrong—why—methinks it might be better—I don't know—I can't fancy this cool way of murder, with a flash and a pop—

*Free.* Oh, Sir, he is a perfect Spaniard with an English heart. I know him—nothing will satisfy him but your blood.

*Aura.* No, Sir—nothing but your blood—your blood, Sir!

*Mode.* Say you so? Why then if nothing else will do, have at you, my boy—

*Free.* Look at your flint and your prime: are they in right order?

*Aura.* I warrant you. Please to stand wide a little, Sir; a ball may graze. [*To Freehold.*] Now, come on, Sir. For want of a cloak let us retreat from each other five yards, then turn round upon our heels at one motion, and let fly. Are you ready?

[*They retire and turn round, Modely fires, and Aura drops as if shot.*]

*Free.* Oh, he is shot! he is killed! my poor boy is murdered.

*Mode.* What have I done? Curse on my steady hand.

*Free.* Help! murder! murder! help!

*Enter Countrymen.*

*Mode.* Say you so? Nay, then 'tis time to save one; by your leave, as fast as my feet or my fears can carry me. [*Exeunt all but Free. and Aura.*]

*Aura.* What are they gone? Is the stage clear?

*Free.* Hah, let me kiss thee, my dear little girl; this was admirably performed, I was afraid you durst not have stood the powder.

*Aura.* No, no—I put in but half a charge, and no wadding—I had really much ado to provoke him to fight; so, so, we'll shew him a little country-play now; we'll teach him to ravish, I warrant.

*Free.* Well, I must wait upon his companion, honest Heartwell. He expects me to attend him to Sir John's, according to his wife's request.

*Aura.* Do so; while I slip the back way through the orchard, into the hall-house, and undress, that I may be with you time enough to finish my part: this is a day of business, 'faith. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, the Hall of Sir John's House.

*Enter Heartwell, Freehold and Tim. Shacklesfigure.*

*Heart.* How could you use a lover so roughly?

*Free.* A rough lover should be used so: why he was just going to knock her down—I suppose that is his method.

*Heart.* And the little girl stood his fire gallantly?

*Free.* O, most heroically! O' my conscience, I believe she would have fought him in earnest.

*Heart.* Is he taken?

*Free.* Ay, ay, we have him fast.

*Heart.* Well, then let his fears pay the price of his sin: I think his punishment very just. But see where old Steddy-muscle stands in form to introduce us.

*Free.* Ay, come on now; you shall see a worthy piece of antiquity, a right bred old English country gentleman; one who keeps open house the whole year round, and yet never took or paid a penny for a vote in his life.

*Shack.* Sir, with the greatest submission, if it shall be your worship's good pleasure, I will wait on the company within, and know if it shall be their pleasure to receive you. [*Exit Shack.*]

*Free.* Do so, old Stiff-rump, do. This fellow keeps himself as regular as his day-book.

*Heart.* Company! What company?

*Free.* A friend or two only, perhaps, that Sir John has invited to a dance, or so.

*Heart.* A dance—a friend—'Sdeath you distract me! Excuse me to him, I beg you,

*Free.* No, not what you must bear with a little noise at first—A bridegroom, and afraid of a fiddle! But see the door opens, and the company are moving towards us.

SCENE opens. *Flora and two Women Servants appear dressed genteelly; they move towards Heart.*

*Heart.* What's here? Ladies too! So, I find I must run thro' the impertinence of the night. I would give a little finger now to be in bed, the curtains drawn, and all quiet, with my dear girl by my side. So—it seems I must salute them—Hah!

*Flora.* Sir, you have stolen a wedding among us here, and we come time enough, I hope, to give you joy of it.

*Heart.* My love! my dear! I am surprised! Why hast thou changed thyself thus from what thou wert?

*Flora.* I hope my features are not altered with my dress.

*Heart.* I swear, my love, thou canst receive no addition by dress, but what will injure the simplicity of thy charms. But, pr'ythee, tell me why have you changed your dress?

*Flora.* To tell you, Sir, the truth, then, I was obliged to change my dress; my landlord has obliged me to it, and you know we country-folk must obey our landlords.

*Heart.* Well, I am satisfied.—You have obeyed him then.

*Flora.* Yes, Sir; but he is a very obstinate, self-willed man; and I think a little too barbarously insists—

*Heart.* Insists! upon what?

*Flora.* Why, he insists upon my performance of the Custom of the Manor; and therefore, in order to make me more pleasing in his eyes, commanded me to dress thus.

*Heart.* Custom of the Manor—Dress yourself—Commanded you to be pleasing to his eye—What is all this heap of confusion and nonsense?

*Free.* Why, Sir, I'll tell you, in short; 'tis this—The lord of our manor has claimed by prescription, time out of mind, and still does claim, the first night's lodging of every tenant's daughter married here; therefore our maidens, when they marry, go out of this parish, unless they are willing to pay the forfeit in kind.

*Heart.* What! you are merry; very merry; so, go on; how!

*Free.* Yet when such an accident as this happened here, he generally used to take an equivalent in money or goods: but now he is resolved to be paid in kind; he will take no modus; and for that reason has sent for you hither, to let you know his claim.

*Heart.* Confound his claim—curse upon his manor, and his custom too: I'll shoot him thro' the head for having the insolence to think on't.

*Free.* Ay, but that is not the case; that is not the business, my friend.

*Heart.* What case! What business! Confound your impertinence: out with it.

*Free.* Why, then suppose your wife should—

*Heart.* Should what? I tread upon a razor's edge—Should what?

*Free.* Should like this landlord.

*Heart.* Like him!

*Free.* Ay, love him, love him to distraction, doat upon him; nay, more, be as willing to pay him down this custom in kind, as he is to receive it.

*Heart.* Furies! damnation! What do you mean?—[*To his wife.*] Madam, what does all this tend to?

*Free.* [*Aside.*] So, so: his blood circulates finely!—Faith, I begin to pity him. What a confounded hurry his spirits are in!

*Flora.* Why, 'tis even so, husband. This landlord



I am obliged to love, obliged to it by all the ties of faith, honour, and gratitude.

*Heart.* Oh, very well, very well! [*Walks about in disorder.*] Tell me, thou evil spirit in an angel's form, wherefore was I chosen out to be thus abused, ha?

*Free.* Because you are a man of fortune, Sir; because the hopes in a little time to break your heart, and enjoy the full third of two thousand pounds a year.

*Heart.* Pray, Madam, favour me—You see I bear this affair very calmly—Pray, tell me, tho' I suppose 'tis no unreasonable request—what particular obligations you have to this landlord?

*Flora.* Such, Sir, of such a nature—you force me to repeat them—as nothing can dissolve. I love him passionately, and I believe his affection for me is mutual; nay, I hope it will endure to the last moment of my life.

*Heart.* That it shall; for I'll put an end to it instantly. [*Offers to draw, Freehold holds him.*]

*Free.* Hold, hold! Fie, Don Orlando! draw upon a woman. Look ye, Sir, erect your front, hold up your head, and learn to bear your fortune like a husband. I assure you, Sir, your lady has been at St. James's, she has, Sir; and she plays at piquet, omere, badet; yes, and has her assemblies, tea-tables, visiting-days; together with a polite taste of every incidental pleasure thereunto belonging.

*Heart.* [*Singing.*] Tol, lol, toll—Pray, Me'em, what's o'clock? I have been married but four hours, and I am breeding already. My wife, it seems, has antedated my commission. Get my horses ready. I'll ride post to Japan, but I'll be rid of this affair. But first I'll cut this toll-taking rascal's throat. A dog! Who shall drink his skim-milk? What's his name? Where is he? Who is this landlord?

*Flora.* Let your passion abate a little: let it ebb a while: recal your reason, and I'll tell you—Know then, you are this landlord, Sir, the sole lord of this demesne and me: this morning I was mistress of this house, these servants, and all the dirty acres within three miles round us; now they are yours, you are their master now.

*Free.* What say you, Sir? Shall the landlord have his due, or no?

*Heart.* My heart, my tongue, my eyes, my soul overflow with joy! what shall I do to pay this unexampled goodness?

*Flora.* I was resolv'd, fully resolv'd, never to venture on a husband, till I was certainly convinc'd my person, and not my fortune, was his aim: that proof I think you have most generously given me, and I feel myself transported with joy; when I think I am capable of making you this grateful return.—I hope you will forgive the little deceits I have us'd to procure these assurances.

*Heart.* Give me thy hand, thy lips, thy heart; there let me dwell for ever, I cannot be more happy.

*Flora.* I thought our jest grew a little too severe at last. It gave me pain to see him suffer so for an imaginary evil.

*Free.* Oh, it was a proof of his passion; 'tis good to give nature a slip now and then; 'tis like a race in a frosty morning, it sets the blood upon the flow most deliciously.—But see your friend in bonds, Mr. Modely.

*Modely brought in, guarded by two Country Fellows, a Constable, &c.*

*Heart.* What! in captivity, George!

*Const.* An' it please your worship, we have catch'd a vagabond man here, who has committed a murder as I may say, in neighbour Freehold's Five-Acres; and so, Sir, an' like you, we bring him hither to take his exhibition upon the said burglary afore Sir Jaan.

*Heart.* Murdered! Who has he murdered?

*Const.* Neà neà, I know nat.—The young fellow and he beliken ha' had some words abouten their sweethearts, and so he shot 'em.—That's aw.

*Heart.* I always told yod, George, what these wild ways would bring you to, but you would still run riot up on every thing; what could you expect?

*Mod.* Yes, faith, we have made a very pretty expedition—One of us is marry'd, and t'other may be hang'd. My comfort is, I shall be out of my pain first.

*Flora.* Oh, my dear, that barbarous man, it seems, has kill'd one of the prettiest youths that ever liv'd, the promise of the finest gentleman.

*Mod.* Hah! A very fine gentleman, truly.—Hark ye, friend, you that are so happy in your chains, don't insult.—The wasps have been at those sweet-meats.—The little rascal bound'd of favours from that very virtuous lady your spouse—and therefore I kill'd him.

*Heart.* That does not relate to me, my dear George; tier person was her own, you know, till within these few hours—Pr'ythee, don't mind these things now, but turn all thy thoughts on another world—Think on thy past life, and tremble.

*Mod.* A contented one, too—Mighty good! I don't doubt, as this was a gentleman's duel, I shall have gentlemen's play for my life: keep my chamber a month or two, touch cold iron, and come out as free as liberty—While you, having beat your poor wings in vain against the bar of your conjugal cage, sit sullenly moulting the remainder of your feathers, and sicken to death o' the pip.

*Free.* I believe I shall secure that affair; I can prove premeditated malice; I can prove the challenge; and you know very well I saw you shoot him before his pistol was cock'd.

*Mod.* So---so---Nay, then my business is done! Thou devil, what have I done to thee, that thou tormentest me thus?—If I could come at thee, I'd pawn my credit for one sin more, and send thee down to the father of falsehood, with a lye in thy mouth.

*Heart.* Don't vex the poor man so.

*Flora.* Consider him, I beseech you, as a dying man.

*Heart.* True! All his time will be little enough; don't put him into a passion now.

*Mod.* Fools and cuckolds—Your pity is as contemptible as your scorn—Sir, Sir, why do you treat me thus?

*Flora.* Shall I send for Mr. Puzzletext? He will give you some wholesome, ghostly advice. Poor creature, how he looks!

*Mod.* Insulting devil!

*Flora.* He will shew you, in a clear light, the folly of wenching.

*Heart.* Have you no feeling, George? no sense of your condition?

*Mod.* Faith, my friend, barbarous as thou art, I have a heart that yet relents for thee, tho' thou art thus unkind: I would not live, methinks, to see thee hen-peck'd round the parish, hunted like a craven by a pullet of thy own dunghill! No, free thyself like a man—Burn powder first, faith do; dispatch an ounce of lead thro' thy unthinking *pia mater*, and sleep quietly once for all.

*Free.* He raves, poor man, he raves.

*Flora.* Send for the parson quickly, before his reason fails. He looks very wildly.

*Heart.* Ay---he may try at least to make him feel.

*Free.* Ah—I am afraid his conscience is very callous.

*Heart.* Suppose we send for a doctor and a surgeon—

*Free.* And breathe a vein, and purge, and shave—

Where's Sir John?

*Mod.* Pox o' the parson, the doctor, the surgeon,

Sir John, and all of you. What, Mr. Constable, am I to be set up here, like a shrove-tide cock, to be pelted by every clown in the hundred?

Enter Sir John.

Sir John. Give you joy, cousin Betty, give you joy: codso, you prog very well for yourself----I did not know you went a husband-hunting all this while--- Give you joy, Sir, give you joy!---What, you have stolen a fortune, and did not know it; very good, very good.

Heart. An accident only, Sir John; I was walking in the fields, when a star shot, and took me up into it's orb.

Sir John. That is nonsense---but 'tis pretty, very pretty. Come, gentlemen, what will you drink? What will you drink? Codso! Where is Tim? Where is Tim? Odd, we will be very merry; I am heartily glad of this affair; every man shall buy a pair of new lungs; we'll shut ourselves up, remove the cellar into the great hall, and make one continual roar of joy that shall last a twelvemonth.

Heart. Sir, here's an angry person, an acquaintance of mine, who has committed a gentleman's murder, and is in great haste for his mittimus; pray dispatch him.

Sir John. Codso, I am sorry for it; pray let me know the case.

Enter Constable with Aura prisoner.

Const. An't please your worship, here's another vagrom that we have taken upon disposition of his concerns in the said murder, and so having pistols in his pockets, we ha' brought him afore your worship.

Sir John. Bring him nearer; shew me his face. Godso, a pretty young fellow! let me look at him. What! how! Madam Aura, as I live! What whim, whatchimers, what adventure put thee into this habit?

Mode. Ha!---Aura!--alive too, in my little Hector's clothes, I vow to gad---Tol, lol, dol, lol---Heark'e, my little reprobate bully---I am surprizingly rejoiced to see thee; faith I am! Buss!--Gad, I never was so much in love with thee in my life.

Aura. Will you ravish me again, Mr. Modely?---Huh. Odd if you do, I'll swinge you.

Mode. Heartwell, how dost? Madam Flora, your most obedient---Joy, Madam, joy! Freehold, faith, thou art a very clever old gentleman.---Sir John, I rejoice to see you---I am prodigiously pleased, in troth; I was in a horrible cold sweat just now, tho' my proud heart would not own it.

Flora. Ah, if they could but frighten you into sobriety once.

Mode. I should sink into a husband; tho' faith, I find a strange stir within me about that whimsical girl there: heark'e, Madam, dare you venture upon a rake, in full assurance (as some ladies have) that your charms will reduce him?---

Aura. And so fall a martyr to my pride instead of my virtue.

Flora. Hold, Sir, I have some interest here, and I don't think you tame enough yet to be marry'd---But if the girl is foolish enough to venture, why let her own inclinations lead her: and then if she falls into a ditch, she can't complain of her guide.

Aura. Indeed I shall not give you that opportunity of being reveng'd.

Mode. Perhaps the punishment may be mine; try me, I trust, since I can have you no other way.

Aura. I tell you, Sir, you must, before I dare give credit to you, serve me faithfully at least two whole months together, and then if we like one another as well as we do now---Why, we'll settle our for-

tures and our inclinations.

Mode. And jog on in the road of our fathers.

Aura. Amen.

Mode. So be it.

Flora. I am sorry to hear your misfortune; in our absence, it seems, the house was robbed. [To Sir John.

Sir John. Codso! Ay, ay, a villainous story, cousin. The Duke of Gasconade lay here last night; ay, his grace did me the honour---But he was most barbarously treated. I am in hopes of catching 'em: if I do---

Enter Lurcher to Sir John.

Lurch. Sir, if you please, one word.

Sir John. Well, what have you to say? I am very busy. What would you have, friend?

Lurch. Had not you a man of quality lodg'd in your house last night?

Sir John. Yes, I had, Sir; and what then? what

Lurch. You have a nephew.

[then]

Sir John. Ha! what!

Lurch. That man of quality was your nephew.

Sir John. And you are he! Ay, 'tis so, 'tis so; why! I am struck dumb, ay, really, quite speechless.---Why, could a man who looked so like quality, d'ye see---Well, well, 'tis an impudent, a very impudent age, and verily thou art the most impudent fellow in it---Codso, I'll have thee hanged in thy blue garret and Bristol stones for a theatrical peer as thou art.

Lurch. Please to hear me one word, Sir.

Sir John. Ay, ay---I am your grace's most obedient humble servant, and return you my most hearty thanks for the particular favours you have bestowed on the most unworthy of your creatures: heark ye, poltroon, did you never hear of *scandalum magnatum*, and so forth? But what can you say for yourself now, hah?

Lurch. Sir, I say that uncommon generosity with which you treated me, under that feigned character I bore, struck so warmly upon my mind, I could not bear the compunction I felt even from my success; and thus I throw myself upon your mercy, am ready to restore all I have wrong'd you of, and only beg your forgiveness.

Sir John. This is frankly done, very generously done, indeed---In troth, the rogue touches me, he has almost brought tears into my eyes; I profess he has---What shall I do?

Lurch. Necessity drove hard---My creditors threatened me hourly with a gaol---Nature prompted me to struggle with every difficulty; if you can have a favourable thought of me---

Sir John. I profess the young knave has conquered---I profess he has---[Turning to Lurcher.] Well, Dick, I do, I do forgive thee---I profess my heart is so full it runs over at my eyes.

Lurch. Your extreme goodness covers me with confusion.

Sir John. Well, will your grace dismiss the rascals, pay the rascals, and send 'em home to their wives?

Heart. Let these accidents; George, hereafter, when you shall please to think, make you remember, that there is no real lasting good but in virtue; and that the greatest happiness below consists, however libertines and half-wits may affect to ridicule it, in honourable love.

When heaven conspicuous merit would reward, A virtuous woman is the great reward: This lovely blessing sweetens life alone, Soothes all our ills, and keeps hard fortune down; Gives us an antepast of joys above, Beauty and virtue, harmony and love.